

From May 11 to 16, 2000, Garin-Hart-Yang Research conducted a telephone survey for the League of Conservation Voters Education Fund among a representative sample of 606 voters in Maryland. The statistical margin of error for a survey with this sample size is $\pm 4.1\%$ and higher for specific subgroups.

The League of Conservation Voters Education Fund survey yields interesting news about Marylanders' attitudes toward the environment and conservation issues. Concern about and support for protecting the environment is extensive, as Marylanders have a more pessimistic view of the future than do voters in other states that we have studied.

In particular, Maryland voters are concerned about water quality—the Chesapeake Bay is a strong reference point for them. Related to this concern, Marylanders are very willing to make the environment a prime consideration when they enter the voting booth, and they strongly support pro-environment candidates. While Marylanders support many environmental reforms, the polling shows that a majority would prefer that current laws be better enforced, rather than new ones enacted.

Sprawl and overdevelopment are a serious concern among voters all across the state, and they are willing to limit growth to protect their quality of life. Considering that traffic congestion is one of the most reviled consequences of sprawl, it is not surprising that Marylanders are willing to leave behind their cars and support alternate forms of transportation.

The following is a summary of the survey findings.

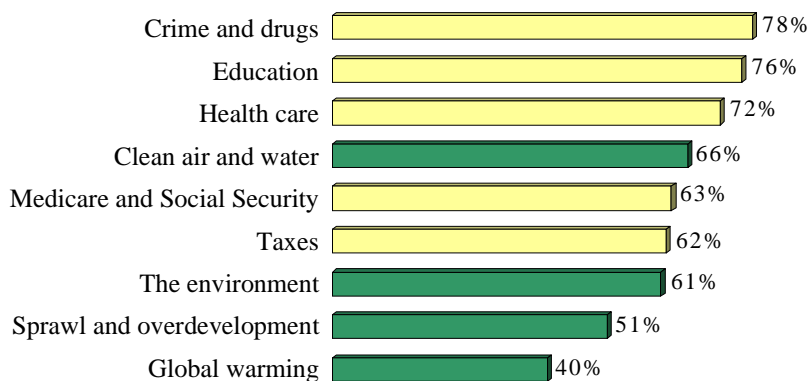
<p>Environmental issues are important to Maryland voters, and although the environment is not at the top of their issue agenda, a majority of voters in all subgroups are concerned about the environment.</p>

A solid majority of Marylanders are very concerned (rating of 8 to 10 on a 10-point scale) about clean air and water (66%) and the environment (61%). This concern reaches across all groups—contrary to popular belief, the environment is not an important issue among just young and affluent voters. Women, blacks, and urban dwellers are somewhat more concerned about these issues than are other voters. Voters in Baltimore City are more concerned about clean air and

water (75%) and the environment (76%) than are voters in other parts of the state, although majorities outside the City of Baltimore are very concerned about these issues as well—Baltimore, Carroll, and Harford Counties 67% and 56%, Anne Arundel and Howard Counties 63% and 59%, Prince George’s County 70% and 59%, Montgomery County 68% and 67%, Southern Maryland and the Eastern Shore 59% and 58%, and Western Maryland 65% and 58%. In addition to having broader environmental concerns, half (51%) of Maryland voters are concerned about sprawl and overdevelopment, while two in five (40%) are concerned about global warming.

Environment Is Important Part Of Issue Agenda

% very concerned (8 to 10 on a 10-point scale)



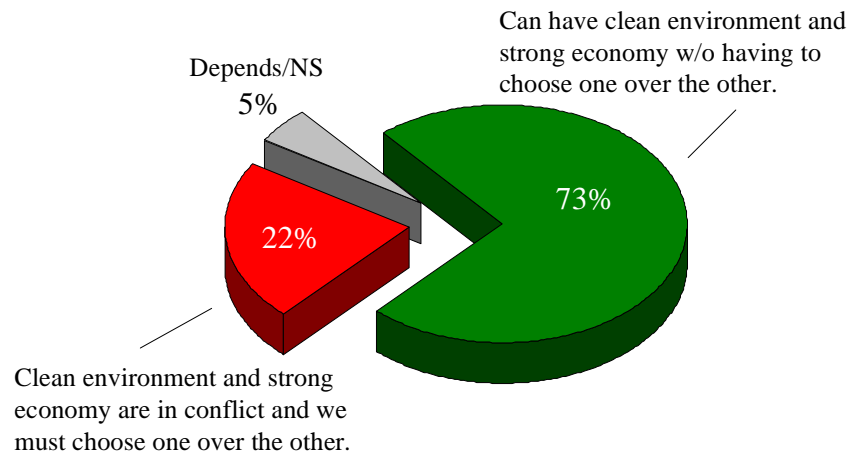
The Chesapeake Bay is a strong reference point for Marylanders. A majority (58%) say that they are very concerned about the safety and quality of the water in Maryland’s rivers, bays, and streams, and another 26% are fairly concerned. Marylanders’ top environmental concern is water quality: 32% name this as their top environmental concern, and another 24% say that they worry most about the Chesapeake Bay, waterways, and rivers. These are top concerns among voters of all political persuasions. Voters in southern Maryland and on the Eastern Shore place the Bay at the top of their environmental concerns (34%). Voters say that the top reasons to support stronger measures to protect Maryland’s rivers, bays, and streams are to protect the public health

and safety (34%), and to protect the safety and quality of our drinking water (33%). Air quality (25%), and sprawl and uncontrolled growth (16%) are high on the list of things about which Maryland voters worry. Voters in Montgomery County (24%) and western Maryland (24%) place sprawl somewhat higher than average on their list of concerns.

The mood in Maryland is somewhat more pessimistic than in other areas of the country. Just 27% of Marylanders expect the quality of the environment to improve in the next five years, 47% say it will stay about the same, and 24% feel it will get worse. Among voters who are very concerned about sprawl, 30% see the environment getting worse in the next five years. However, among voters who are very active outdoors, 34% say that the environment will likely improve during this time.

Maryland voters strongly reject the notion that we must choose between a strong economy and a clean environment, as nearly three-quarters (73%) believe that we can have both at the same time. Voters of all partisan stripes reject this false choice—73% of Democrats, 72% of independents, and 75% of Republicans say that we do not have to choose one or the other. Blue-collar workers (72%), men (70%), and seniors (64%) are somewhat less likely to believe that this is a zero-sum game. Attitudes in different parts of the state vary very little: Baltimore City 73%, Baltimore, Carroll, and Harford Counties 65%, Anne Arundel and Howard Counties 78%, Prince George's County 70%, Montgomery County 78%, Southern Maryland and the Eastern Shore 71%, and Western Maryland 85%. Among voters who say that we must choose, many more would pick the environment (61%) over the economy (28%). Even among blue-collar workers who feel that we cannot have both, 55% would choose the environment.

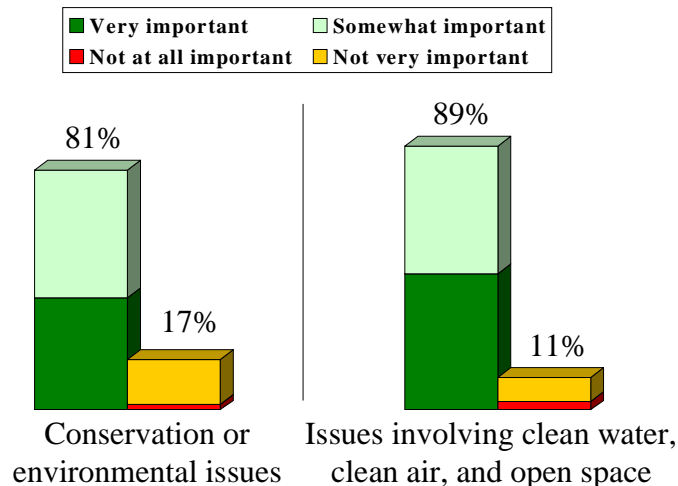
Clean Environment vs. Strong Economy



Environmental issues are on voters' minds when they enter the voting booth, and when the issues are described in specific terms, their power to affect voting preferences greatly increases. Maryland voters are quite likely to vote for a pro-environment candidate.

A very strong majority (81%) of Maryland voters say that conservation or environmental issues are very or somewhat important to them when deciding how to vote. When the issues are described as “involving clean water, clean air, and open space” the proportion saying that these issues are important increases to 89%, with 46% saying that the issues are *very* important in their voting decisions. While at least 80% of Marylanders in each age group say that these issues are important, older voters place a higher level of significance on these issues—45% of 50- to 64-year-olds and 43% of seniors say that these issues are very important. Conservation and environmental issues also are particularly important among women (45% very important), blacks (48%), independents (45%), and voters in Baltimore City (53%) and in southern Maryland and on the Eastern Shore (48%). Regardless of the wording, a majority of voters in each party say that these issues are important to them.

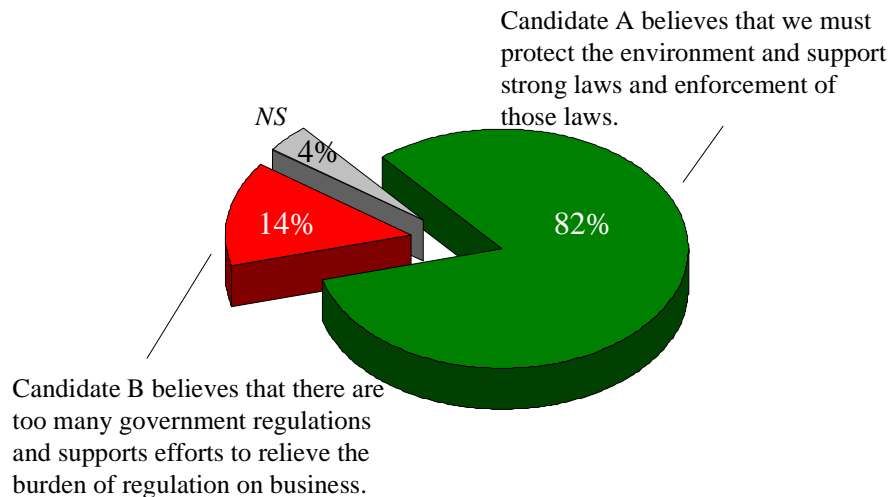
Importance In Voting



A solid majority (79%) of Marylanders say that campaign contributions influence how elected officials vote on environmental issues, including 63% who say that these contributions influence votes a lot. Voters are somewhat more inclined to believe that these contributions influence votes against (38%) rather than in favor of (21%) environmental regulations, but fully 28% of voters say that contributions cut both ways.

A majority strongly prefer a pro-environment candidate to a fewer-regulations candidate: 82% would vote for the former, including 65% who would strongly support that candidate, whereas only 14% would support the latter. In fact, a majority of voters in each political party would support a pro-environment candidate (90% of Democrats, 90% of independents, and 61% of Republicans), and although majorities from all walks of life support an environmental candidate, support is much stronger among white-collar workers and retirees. Black voters also are very drawn to this type of candidate, as 91% favor the pro-environment candidate (79% *strongly* favor).

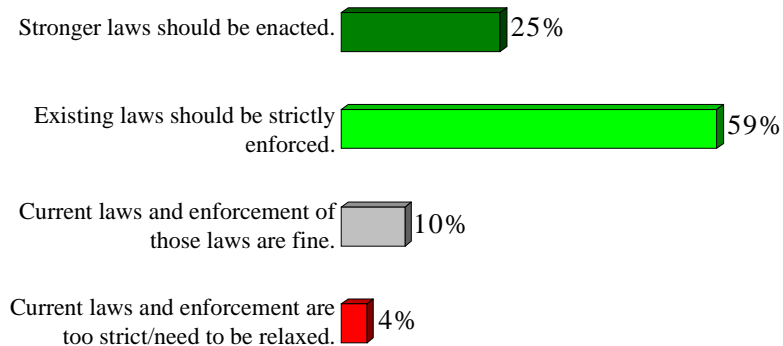
Strong Support For Environmental Candidate



Maryland voters want government to take a more active role in protecting the environment by either enforcing current laws more vigorously (the consensus opinion) or by enacting stronger laws to protect the environment. To this end, Maryland voters support a wide array of environmental policies, such as polluter responsibility and mass transit. Most of the policies that voters support are in the mold of closing loopholes and enforcing existing laws more aggressively.

A large majority (84%) say that either stronger laws protecting the environment should be enacted (25%) or that existing laws should be more strictly enforced (59%). Marylanders clearly favor enforcement of current environmental laws—a majority in each party say that existing laws are not currently enforced and that they should be done so strictly. This is a mandate for more aggressive enforcement and the closing of loopholes, not the enactment of new environmental laws. Some groups expressing strong concern for the environment in general (notably seniors and urban voters) would prefer strong enforcement of existing laws to the creation of new, stricter environmental laws—just 17% of seniors and 15% of blue-collar workers favor enacting new laws. Voters in Anne Arundel and Howard Counties (33%), Prince George’s County (30%), and Montgomery County (27%) are somewhat more likely to say that laws protecting the environment are not strong enough and stronger laws should be enacted.

Strong Support For Tougher Laws/Enforcement



Maryland voters favor a variety of policies to protect the environment. The items that test well embrace two general themes: they tend to be common-sense measures to close loopholes and enforce current laws more aggressively, and they reflect Maryland's priorities of protecting the Bay and ensuring clean water. In the area of enforcement, there is near-universal agreement that polluters should be required to pay for cleaning up the results of their pollution (97%) and that repeat offenders should receive tough mandatory fines, even if some of these companies risk losing profits (92%). Eighty-five percent favor restricting the dumping of dredged material into the Chesapeake Bay, and 94% favor protecting the state's water quality for recreation and drinking water. These proposals are received favorably across the board. Requiring that communities be notified when pesticides are sprayed in their neighborhoods is slightly more controversial, but still receives a majority of solid support across party lines. The proposals that deal with sprawl issues and open space, although they earn majority support, are more strongly supported among people who are concerned about sprawl. Providing additional funding to maintain Maryland's state parks is particularly popular in western Maryland (79% strongly favor, 96% total favor), where state parks and tourism is a strong component in the economy.

**PROPORTIONS OF MARYLAND VOTERS WHO FAVOR
SELECTED PROPOSALS TO PROTECT OR IMPROVE THE ENVIRONMENT**

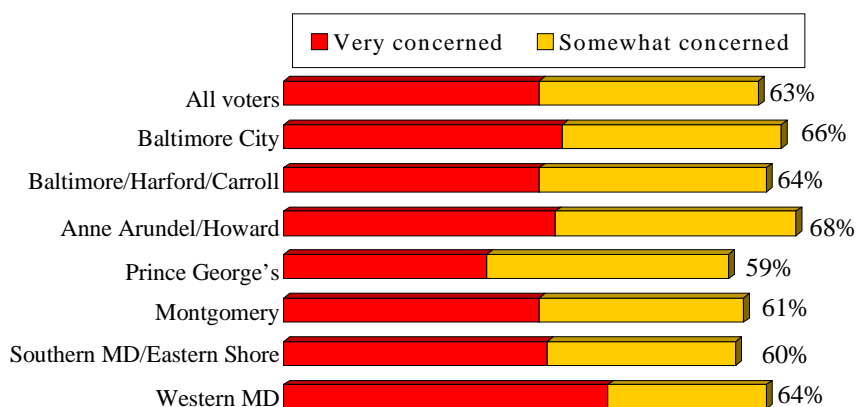
	<u>Strongly Favor</u> %	<u>Somewhat Favor</u> %	<u>Total Favor</u> %
Requiring polluters to pay for cleaning up the results of their pollution	90	7	97
Enacting tough mandatory fines for companies that repeatedly violate environmental laws, even though some companies could lose profits as a result	80	12	92
Restricting the dumping of dredged material into the Chesapeake Bay	79	6	85
Protecting the state's water quality for recreation and drinking water	77	17	94
Requiring that communities be notified about spraying of pesticides in their neighborhood	77	17	94
Requiring local governments to have enough roads, schools, and sewers BEFORE allowing new housing developments	73	20	93
Requiring real estate developers to pay for the added costs of			

building new schools and roads in any new developments	59	26	85
Providing additional funding to maintain Maryland's state parks	57	35	92
Providing funding to purchase undeveloped land for preservation to protect Maryland's open space	55	28	83
Requiring higher fees on developers to pay for the roads, schools, and other needs caused by new development, even if it adds to the cost of housing	53	27	80

A majority of Maryland voters are concerned about sprawl. They see overcrowded schools, traffic jams, and the loss of open space as the primary effects. They strongly favor limits on growth and development to protect their quality of life.

A third (34%) of Maryland voters are very concerned about sprawl and overdevelopment, and another 29% are somewhat concerned. Perceiving sprawl as a problem has very little to do with age, party identification, or income; unlike air pollution, which is difficult to detect, people recognize sprawl when they see it. Among voters who say that they live in a suburban area, 65% are concerned about sprawl (31% very concerned), and in rural areas, 62% of voters are concerned about the encroachment of sprawl (40% very concerned).

Impact Of Sprawl Varies



Given the level of concern over sprawl, it is not surprising that a substantial majority (75%) of Maryland voters want strong limits on growth and development to protect their quality of life from excessive sprawl. Majorities in all areas of the state support limiting growth and development, with voters in western Maryland, southern Maryland, and the Eastern Shore giving limits very solid support. Among those who are very concerned about sprawl, 86% favor limits on growth, and even 60% of those who are not personally concerned about sprawl favor limits.

Large majorities of Democrats (79%), independents (76%), and Republicans (69%) favor such limits, which is further evidence that the sprawl issue has no regard for party lines.

Voters Favor Limits On Growth




Growth and development is inevitable and necessary, and the economic benefits of growth more than offset any problems that growth creates.

All voters  15%

There should be strong limits on growth and development because it is necessary to protect Maryland's quality of life from excessive sprawl and overdevelopment.

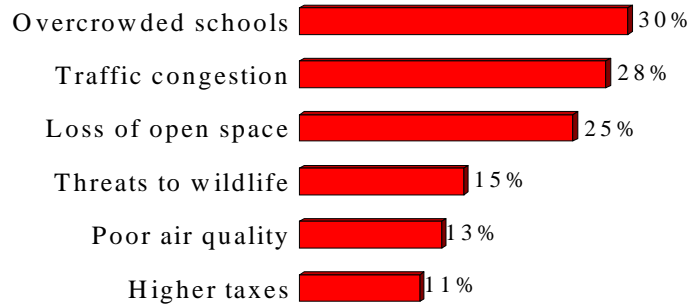
All voters  75%

Concern about sprawl:

Very		86%
Somewhat		81%
Not		60%

Among a list of problems that could result from sprawl, the top concerns are overcrowded schools and classrooms (30%), increased traffic congestion (28%), and loss of open space and farmland (25%). Given the prominence of overcrowded classrooms as a national issue, it is not surprising that it is the number-one concern among Maryland voters. The specter of overcrowded schools is particularly disturbing to women, younger voters (who are more likely to have children in school), blacks, and urban voters. Traffic is the top concern for voters in the metropolitan Washington area, whereas voters in the City of Baltimore are more worried about overcrowded schools.

Impacts Of Sprawl



Maryland voters are willing to take several policy steps to alleviate the effects of sprawl. Requiring local governments to have enough roads, schools, and sewers before allowing new housing developments has universal appeal. A majority strongly favor providing funding to preserve open space and requiring developers to pay for schools and roads in new developments.

**PROPORTIONS OF MARYLAND VOTERS WHO FAVOR
SELECTED PROPOSALS TO CONTROL SPRAWL**

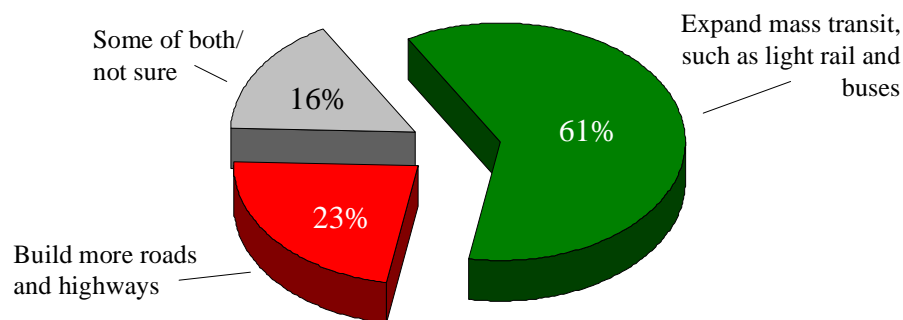
	Strongly Favor %	Somewhat Favor %	Total Favor %
Requiring local governments to have enough roads, schools, and sewers BEFORE allowing new housing developments	73	20	93
Requiring real estate developers to pay for the added costs of building new schools and roads in any new developments	59	26	85
Providing funding to purchase undeveloped land for preservation to protect Maryland's open space	55	28	83
Requiring higher fees on developers to pay for the roads, schools, and other needs caused by new development, even if it adds to the cost of housing	53	27	80

As for traffic, Maryland voters are ready to explore new modes of transportation—six in ten (61%) believe that we should use state funds to expand mass transit, as opposed to building more roads and highways (23%). In fact, a majority in each party favor investing in mass transit over

building more roads and highways. Urban voters are particularly willing to spend funds on mass transit (67%), as are voters who are more concerned about sprawl (65%). Attitudes in different parts of the state vary somewhat with voters in Baltimore City (74%), Western Maryland (76%), and Montgomery County (69%) giving the strongest support to investing in mass transit. Voters in Baltimore, Carroll, and Harford Counties (52%), Anne Arundel and Howard Counties (59%), Prince George's County (48%), and Southern Maryland and the Eastern Shore (59%), are somewhat less enthusiastic about mass transit, but still support it fairly strongly.

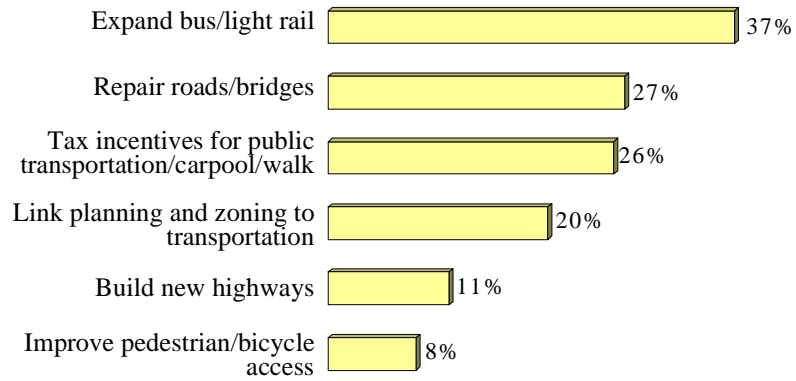
Reducing Traffic

When it comes to the issue of reducing traffic and increasing the availability of convenient and safe transportation, should we use state funds to . . . ?



On a list of transportation priorities, mass transit again comes out on top—37% of Maryland voters say that expanding bus and light rail should be a top priority for investing public funds. In the City of Baltimore, expanding mass transit is a priority for 52% of voters. Even in rural areas, this is the top priority. Significant proportions of voters also support placing a priority on providing tax incentives for using public transportation (26%) and on linking planning and zoning decisions to transportation policies (20%). Although a fair amount (27%) of voters believe that repairing area roads and bridges is important, many fewer (11%) think that building new highways is a wise investment.

Transportation Spending Priorities



These priorities are reflected in voters' responses to a series of transportation proposals. Providing incentives to use public transportation and expanding the availability of alternate types of transportation receive much more support than proposals involving new road and highway construction. Residents of Montgomery and Prince George's Counties were asked about the Inter-County Connector as a proposal to deal with traffic and congestion. Montgomery County residents are more divided over the Inter-County Connector (56% support and 22% oppose) than are Prince George's County residents, who generally favor the project (66% support, 20% oppose). The proposal with the most broad appeal is offering tax incentives to businesses that allow flex time, telecommuting, and staggered work hours for employees. Increasing parking fees and tolls to encourage the use of mass transit and car pooling is the only proposal that does not receive majority support.

**PROPORTIONS OF MARYLAND VOTERS WHO FAVOR
SELECTED PROPOSALS TO DEAL WITH TRAFFIC AND CONGESTION**

	<u>Strongly Support</u> %	<u>Somewhat Support</u> %	<u>Total Support</u> %
Providing tax breaks to employers that offer commuter options to employees, such as public transportation passes and organizing car pools	48	38	86
Offering tax incentives to businesses that offer flex time, telecommuting, and staggered work hours for employees	52	28	80
Increasing funding to pay for expanded mass transit	38	40	78
Building safe and accessible bike paths for use in commuting as well as recreation	38	39	77
Increasing funding to pay for expanded public transit	39	36	75
Restructuring employee benefit packages to include subsidies for those who use mass transit or a cash bonus that is equivalent to a parking subsidy	35	38	73
Building more roads and highways	22	28	50
Increasing parking fees and tolls for drivers of single occupancy vehicles to encourage the use of mass transit and car pooling	18	24	42